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ABSTRACT

An investigation of the political and social content of mass media and the manner in which individuals and groups evaluate and use mass media is summarized in this report. The first section provides a brief overview of the development of the mass media system in Sweden, while the second section outlines the theoretical framework for the present study and offers an orientation to the types and aims of related current research. The third and fourth sections summarize the results of the study, and the final section presents a general discussion of the functions of the press for the Swedish political system. (FL)

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ATTITUDES OF POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS TO MASS MEDIA

Lars Aldemark / Lennart Weibull

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Paper prepared for the ECPR Workshop on the political role of Mass Media, Strasbourg

THE ROLE OF THE PRESS IN SOCIETY

INTRODUCTION

The recent development of the newspaper industry has led the Swedish government to appoint the third commission on the Press in the last decade: The Government Commission on the Press of 1972.

One of the central tasks for the commission on the Press of 1972 is to create an aim for the press policy of the Swedish government. To attain such an aim it has been found important to map the role of the press in the Swedish society. One wants to know the significance of different daily papers in relation to magazines, radio, television and other media. One is searching information about the effects of the development within the mass media field on the functions of the daily press.

The frame that the press investigation specifies for the study is - as mentioned - the role of the press in society. By society it is here reasonable to understand mainly the political life: political parties, pressure groups and associations, public opinion etc. Also other fields as economy and culture are closely linked to the political system. It is necessary to throw light on these as well. The central task however is to achieve a knowledge of the significance of the daily press and other mass media for the formation of the political public opinion. The two main questions are:

1. What image of the political life is given in the mass media?
2. How do individuals, groups and associations evaluate and use mass media?

To get answers to these two main questions it has been necessary to investigate firstly the political and social content of mass media (the media image), secondly the role of mass media for individuals and groups in society (the media role).

In this paper we are trying to line out the background and content of this research programme. In the first section of the paper is given a brief overview on the development of the mass media system in Sweden as a background for the research.

The second section will give an outline of the theoretical framework for the research as well as an orientation of what types of projects are going on with what aims.

The head line for this paper is 'Attitudes of Political Organizations to Mass Media'. This is also the frame for the first investigation carried out by our research (Aldemark-Weibull 1974). Sections three and four will summarize the main results of this study.

The last section is a more general discussion of the functions of the press for the Swedish political system. The empirical data for this part of the paper are also taken from the investigation on political organizations.

1. MASS MEDIA IN SWEDEN

1.1 Some notes on development

The rising of a party political press in Sweden may be dated back to 1880's. Parallell with the expansion of political organizations at this time - the Labour Movement, the suffrage movement etc - the development of a politicization of the newspapers took place. Newspapers began to engage in political campaigning and they openly stated their political sympathies. Diffuse political terms disappeared and were replaced by party labels such as liberal, conservative, social democrat (Hadenius-Seveborg-Weibull 1970).

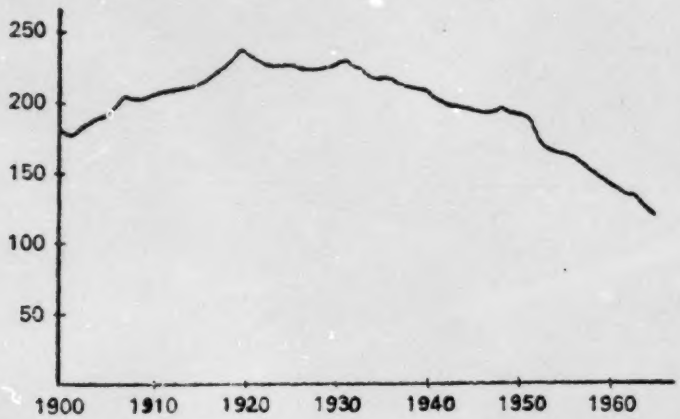
The development of the political press can be seen as a transactional process between the newspaper system and the expanding political system (Höyer-Hadenius-Weibull 1973). The tendencies in the political life determined in many respects what happend on the newspaper market.

The development of the political press, however, was quite different for different political parties. For example the Social Democratic Party in most cases founded their own newspapers as a part of the labour movement, whereas the already existing papers mostly adopted liberal or conservative party labels (Hadenius-Seveborg-Weibull 1970).

If we study the press situation in Sweden at the beginning of this century, we find a steeply rising curve (Diagram 1). The peak was reached 1919 when there were 235 newspapers which had a publication frequency of at least two days a week and which had been published for at least a year.

Figure 1. Numbers of Swedish Newspapers 1900-1960.

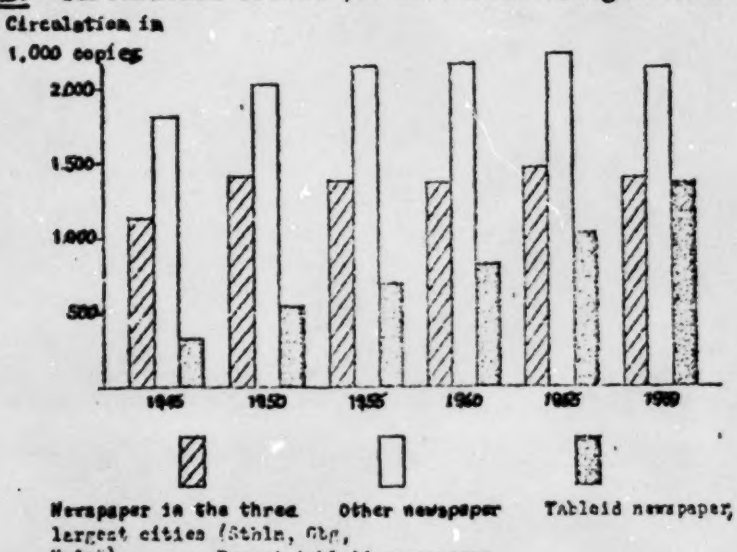
Diagram 1. Numbers of Swedish newspapers, 1900–60.



Source:Tollin 1965

Since this 'golden age' of the political press in Sweden about 50 percent of the newspapers has disappeared. During the time the total circulation of the press has risen, only since the second world war with about 40 percent. This expansion, however, has mostly meant that the tabloid newspapers of the three largest cities in Sweden have gained a larger share of the total circulation. The development of the more 'traditional' newspapers shows a more even curve (figure 2).

Figure 2. Circulation Growth for Different Categories of Swedish Newspapers.



Source: Official Newspaper Statistics

These two tendencies which have been illustrated through figure 1 and 2 give the frames for the concentration process going on in the Swedish newspaper system. Two types of concentration processes may be distinguished:

1. Local market concentration focusing the determinants for local monopoly

2. Non-local concentration focusing the regional and national level of concentration as regards ownership

The first type mainly handles economic and social factors on the local level, the second is concerned mostly with trends in newspaper ownership and its national effects. Put in a rough way, it could be said that in the first case the interest is on the background to concentration, whereas in the second it is on the effects.

Evidently these two lines of analysis are not exclusive. On the contrary they often seem to be stages in one and the same process. In the Nordic countries the post war developments have been a trend to local monopolies. Consequently debates and research have been directed to the first of the two perspectives (Furhoff 1967, Thomsen 1972). The basic question is what this development means to the political role of the Swedish newspaper.

1.2 The present situation

What about a party political press in Sweden of today? What consequences has the local market concentration for the local political debate?

Going out from official newspaper statistics there still seem to be good reasons to speak about a party press in Sweden. The figures of table 1 (1969) show the distribution of party affiliations in the Swedish press.

Table 1: Daily Newspapers (2-7 days/week) distributed according to political label and circulation (1969).

Circulation	Political label							
	h	cp	fp	b	s	ober. lib.	opol.	Total
4 999	3	1	-	-	-	-	2	6
5 000- 9 999	5	-	3	1	-	-	3	12
10 000-14 999	6	1	5	1	7	-	2	22
15 000-19 999	4	1	5	-	5	-	1	16
20 000-29 999	1	2	2	1	3	-	2	10
30 000-49 999	5	1	11	-	3	1	1	22
50 000-99 999	3	-	5	-	-	1	-	9
100 000-	1	-	3	-	2	1	-	7
Total	28	6	34	2	20	3	11	104
Median circulation	14 800	19 000	31 800	8 650	18 000	88 900	11 900	

h = Conservative
cp = Center Party
fp = Liberal
b = Bourgeoise
s = Social Democratic
ober.lib. = Independent
opol. = Nonpolitical

Source: (Hadenius-Weibull 1973)

The party political structure of the Swedish press of today, however, cannot be said to be as clear as the pattern manifested in table 1. Firstly there is a slight tendency to de-politicization of some large newspapers, which now labels themselves "independant liberal". They are still non-socialist in views but are not supporting any particular bourgeoisie party (Hadenius-Weibull 1973).
Secondly, there are different types of ties between newspapers and party organizations within different political grouping. For example the Social Democrats and the Center Party often own their newspapers through some party

branch, whereas the conservative and liberal newspaper mostly have looser ties to 'their' parties. This can also be demonstrated from table 2, which gives an overview of the party subsidies in Swedish press.

Table 2. Party subsidized newspapers in the Swedish press 1945-1965.

	Conservatives	Liberals	Agrarian	Social Democratic	Communists
Monopoly-papers	5	5	5	0	0
First papers	0	0	0	2	0
Second papers	20	11	9	23	3
Sum	25	16	14	25	3
Suspended by 31/12 1965	23	15	6	10	2

Source: Furhoff, 1966.

As can be seen from this table the amount of newspapers receiving subsidies have been rather large. In 1962 the Social Democrats used nearly 11 mill. S.kr. to this end. Conservatives reportedly invested between 1.5 and 2 mill. S.kr. by the mid-fifties. Subsidies from the remaining parties have been more modest.

Clearly, the reason why the Social Democrats have had to invest more in their press derives from the fact that their newspapers usually occupy an unfavorable market position, where they don't receive much advertising revenues. In spite of large investments the party could not prevent two of their largest dailies to fold.

On this background the first commission of the press was formed in Sweden by 1963. In its mandate to the commission the government did not deny that a decrease in newspapers also meant more efficiency in the industry, but that in the last event this development could threaten the freedom of speech. For this reason it was the responsibility of society to see to it that diversity was preserved in the press (SOU 1965:22).

The Government Commission on the Press of 1963 showed the interest of the Swedish Government to maintain a party political press in Sweden. Its proposal ended up in so called party subsidies, which should be used for propaganda activities by the parties, i.e. mostly for party press.

A new press commission was appointed in 1967 and here again the question was how to prevent the continuing death of newspapers. This commission took up the idea of a loan fund for the press which would be managed by a special board. It also wanted to rationalize the costly distribution process by stimulating collective distribution.

The support actions decided upon in 1969 soon showed to be inadequate. A number of larger and smaller newspapers were in need of more help than that which could be provided by the loan fund and the reduction for collective distribution. Extensive and direct subventions were needed if several larger and smaller papers were not to be forced to close down.

At this point the government in 1971 suggested direct subsidies to newspapers in weaker market positions financed by an advertising tax. After application from the newspaper to a special government board, aid would be distributed. The government bill was passed with support from the Centre party.

At present the total state subvention to the press in Sweden is 330 million S.kr. (110 million kr. in direct aid: loan fund, reductions for collective distribution; ca 120 million indirect via freedom from sale's tax, subsidized postal rates etc).

1.3 The Commission on the Press of 1972

This tendencies on the newspaper market - worsened economic situations for many newspapers and rising government subsidies - have led to the appointment of the third Government Commission on the Press in ten years.

The background for this commission is the change going on in the total media system. There are not only the concentration of the press, but also new trends in radio and television development. In Sweden, radio and television have since its beginning been a centralized public corporation. However, there are now signs of a tendency to a more local radio and television

structure. In 1973 a government commission proposed the starting of local radio stations in Sweden. Cable tv has also been discussed.

The work of the commission is mostly made in subgroups. The main problem areas can be illustrated by mentioning the names of some groups:

(1) The Role of the Press in Society
Reference group for the research programme presented in this paper

(2) The Mass Media Markets
A group studying the long term development tendencies for newspapers

(3) The Effects of Press Subsidies
A research project analysing the present economic situation of the press with special reference to government subsidies

(4) Technical Development within the Newspaper Industry
A group working with evaluation of development trends in newspaper techniques

(5) Rationalization and Co-operation
A group discussing different possibilities for rationalization - mostly through co-operation - within the newspaper industry.

The report from 1972 Press Commission is planned to be presented in the summer of 1975 (Hadenius 1972.)

2. THE ROLE OF THE PRESS IN SOCIETY-RESEARCH PROGRAMME

2.1 A brief outline of a framework

The starting point for the research programme 'The Role of the Press in Society' is today's situation in the Swedish press. As has been demonstrated in the preceding pages, the newspaper market in Sweden seems to be at some sort of changing point. The party press structure has been broken up by the concentration process on the newspaper market. On the other hand new types of newspapers are expanding. At the same time millions of Swedish crowns are going to the newspaper industry from the government. This money for many newspapers seem to be the only way of keeping alive.

At this point the question put by the 1972 Commission of the Press is: how meaningful are those subsidies? According to which principles shall subsidies be given? To answer these questions we must put another problem:

Which role do newspapers play in the Swedish society of today? Which significance do they have for the work of a democratic political system? For the reporting of political news? For the public opinion formation? Those questions are basic for the research described below.

2.1.1 Some notes on research in Sweden

Within the mass media research one has very often separated studies of senders and studies of receivers, referring to the Lasswell paradigm. Studies of senders aim at the organization and working methods of mass media, while studies of receivers mainly deal with patterns of consumation and effects.

The research that has been dominating so far are investigations of the receivers. Through interview studies one has tried to make surveys of the reading habits and their reasons. Among the above mentioned studies is "Individen och massmedia" (The individual and mass media) by Olof Hultén and Dan Lundberg (Hultén-Lundberg 1968). Furthermore there is reason to mention the investigations initiated by earlier government press commission: the study of "The daily press and the formation of political public opinion" by Jörgen Wetterstål (Westerstål 1965) and "The role of the daily press among mass media" by the commission of 1967 (SOU 1968:48).

Further examples of receiver investigations are the analysis of the radio listeners and the TV viewers which are continually carried out by the department of media research at the Swedish Radio (PUB).

As to sender studies those are relatively few. An increased interest in the study of mass media as institutions is evident. An example of this are the studies of the press concentration in Sweden and investigations of the party press, the relations between the press and the political parties (Furhoff 1967, Hadenius-Seveborg-Weibull 1970).

Another field is the study of news service. Here can be mentioned Jörgen Westerståhls content analysis of the programmes in the Swedish Radio and Stig Hadenius' survey of TT, the Swedish news-agency. (Westerståhl 1972, Hadenius 1971)

The traditional classification of sender studies and receiver studies is in many ways arbitrary. This shows the lack of thorough collected surveys of the total situation of mass media in society. Relatively few published works have attempted to attain this over all view. However, there are examples

of this among the research that has been done within the so called "Local government research project" in which the importance of the daily press and the radio for the municipal communication system was studied (Den kommunala självstyrelsen 1,2 1970, 1971).

2.1.2 The Communication system

In the mass media research many models of analysis have been tried. One noted lack in much of this research is, however, that mass media are often analysed separate from other parts of society. As we see it, it is a fundamental point in understanding the role of mass media, by considering them as components of a larger communication system.

In many ways, mass media per se may be very interesting units of analysis. Studies of the content may give us ideas of the political bias in news reporting. Investigations of journalists working in the media may throw light on how news are handled by an editorial staff. Interview surveys may show how media are used by the so called receiver, the famous median individual of a given society.

As a result of such studies many interesting observations have been brought up to discussion by different researchers. According to our view, however, that is very often where it all has stopped: discussions. It may be stated that this is a natural consequence of research in a relatively new field. Although this may hold for part of the research, we feel that this is not the whole truth. What we mean is needed is the adopting of some sort of general framework, as we have put here, a conception of a communication system.

Talking about a communication system is not at all a novelty (Riley & Riley 1959, de Fleur 1966). But in actual research this approach very often seems to have been neglected. For example, the so called 'use and gratification approach' is as a rule restricted to the individual's relations to mass media. We mean that those relations are not very interesting when not related to the total communication situation of the individual and the output of mass media. (of Holzer 1969.)

Thus, when underlining the communication system approach we will point out the necessity to combine mass media analysis with analysis of other parts of the communication process. For example, when content analysing media it is important to know how news are produced, how the media content is spread

among individuals and groups in society etc. Further, we mean that mass media communication must be related to other types of communication processes within the society, e.g. how communication is circulated within organizations and other relevant substructures (O' son-Weibull 1973).

Consequently, we mean that the communication system can not be isolated from other systems within a society. As we see it, it may be stated that, basically, communication is a bare reflection of an other system: the communication processes are determined by the base of society, the economic and political systems (Israel 1973).

Thus, we mean that a communication systems approach always must be started from an analysis of the basic structure of a society. To understand the communication processes going on, it is, above all, important to know the economic conditions for social life (Dröge 1972, Held 1973, Hennig 1973).

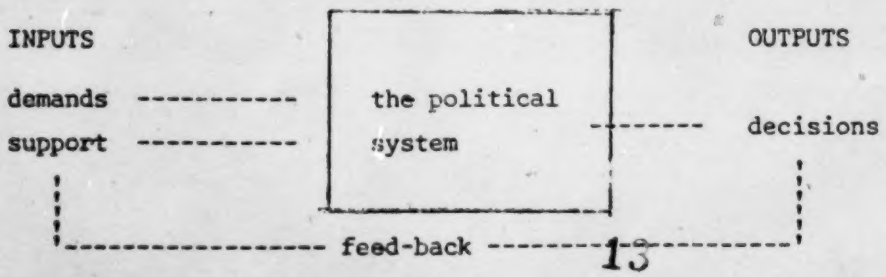
However, this approach in practice is not very easy to apply. In our research programme on the role of the press in society we have tried to follow this approach by choosing a community study model. We have selected four different regions in Sweden, with different socio-economic structures. Although these structures have to be looked at within the frames of one national society, we mean that this is a way to throw light on the basic conditions for the local communication system (of Frederickson - O'Leary 1973).

2.1.3 Political communication

As stated above our main interest is the political role of mass media. How much do newspapers contribute to the functioning of a democratic political system in Sweden?

In our research we have started from a system model of political life, which can be illustrated as follows (figure 3):

Figure 3. A Model of the Political System.



In this model the political life can be considered as a communication process. Different ideas and opinions emerge in society. They are organized with the purpose of influencing political decisions: this is the input of politics. The decisions made by political decision makers are conveyed to the public via different authorities: the output. This output, then, gives a feed-back to the system. (Easton 1969.)

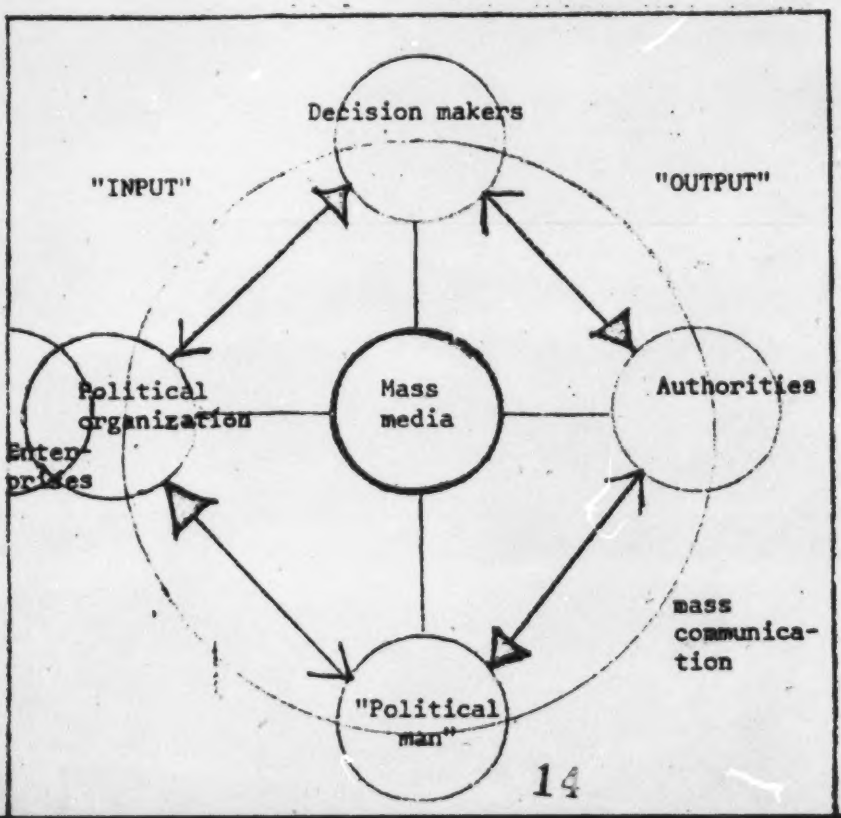
Thus, the political system can be analysed in terms of a series of communication processes.

In a rural society these political processes could be based on personal communication. There was a possibility for the 'political men' to meet for discussing (McQuail 1969).

In the industrial society of the 20th century, however, the importance of personal communication for the functioning of the political system has decreased. In the representative democratic system large organizations dominate the input of politics. The mass media have a central position in the flow of political information.

In figure 4 we have tried to develop a scheme of analysis for the political communication process in the Swedish society. This figure also gives an outline of the conceptual framework for the research programme 'The Role of the Press in Society'. (cf Geissler 1973, Zoll-Hennig 1970.)

Figure 4. The political communication process.



The basis for this model of political communication presented in figure 4 is a traditional view of a representative political system (Lewin 1970.)

Basically the society is built up by individual citizens. The citizens may have a greater or lesser degree of interest in political life. Political opinions expressed by citizens are organized in different ways, e.g. in political parties, interest groups etc. These organizations are composed by individuals with one or several common interests in relation to politics.

Industry and business also represent a form of organized interest in politics. They have, however, another type of structure and lack the democratic character which in principal is typical for organizations such as political parties. Furthermore, the commercial sector is at the same time a part of the basic socio-economic structure which determine the society's way of functioning.

Decision-makers in the figure mainly represent political decision-makers within different types of political institutions such as parliament, local authorities etc.

The decisions made are conveyed via different types of authorities.

This sketch of the political communication process illustrates one direction in the decision-making process: from individual to organization (party), from organization to decision-maker, from decision-maker to authorities, from authorities to individual etc. In reality the exchange of information and opinions also takes place in other directions. The organizations' attempt to recruit sympathizers; opinions of the authorities and businessmen influence the decision-makers; individual citizens and decision-makers may have direct contact etc. This has been illustrated in the figure by the double arrows.

2.1.4 Mass media in political communication

In figure 4, the mass media have been placed in the centre of the political process. As we see it, the mass media have two roles in the political communication system:

(1) As mediators of political information.
The mass media are the dominant reporters of what is happening in politics. Especially for the individual citizen, press, radio and television as a rule are the most important sources of information.

(2) As independent institutions in political life.
The mass media represent interests of their own or of the groups with which they are sympathizing. The mass media here act as commentators of what is going on in politics.

The central element in the conceptual framework is that we mean that - from a theoretical point of view - mass media do have a great importance for the functioning of a political system. The question for empirical research is how different kinds of media situations and different kinds of media affect the functioning of political life:

(A) Which effects do different media situations and different media have on different actors in political life? How do

(1) individual citizens

(2) political parties and other political groupings

(3) decision makers and

(4) authorities of different types

utilize and judge different newspapers, periodicals, radio and televison?

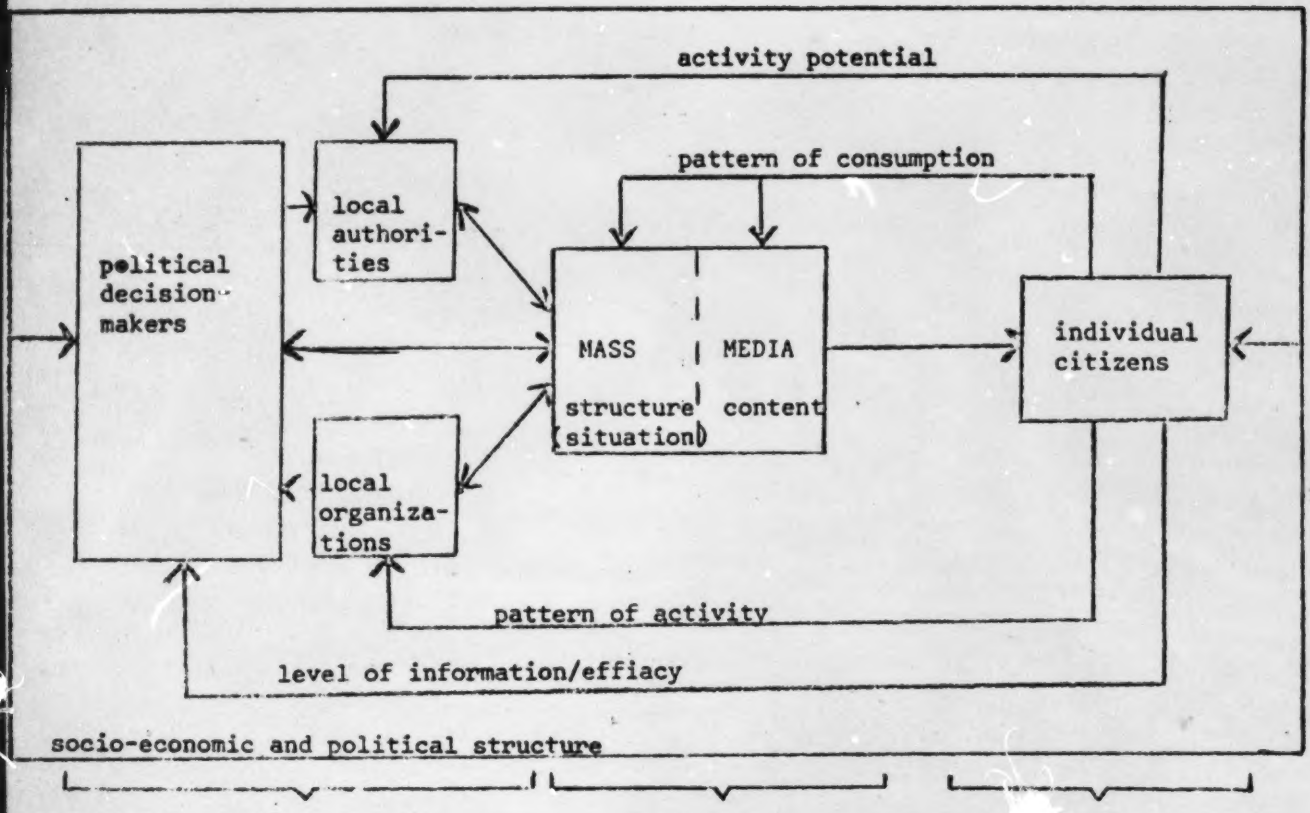
(B) Which pictures of political life are given by different media in different media situations? (of Cox Morgan 1973.)

These two lines of analysis are directly linked. Investigations based on this approach will be carried out within four local regions in Sweden, which differ in socio-economic and political structure as well as local media situation.

In summarizing the framework, we can now illustrate our approach by a final figure. (Figure 5). Moreover, in the enclosed bibliography you will find further references on the theoretical framework as it has been lined out in this section. A more extensive report on the theoretical background will be published later this spring.

The design of the research paradigm will be furhter discussed in the following section.

Figure 5.



step 1:

analysis of local decision-makers, political organisations and authorities.

step 2:

analysis of the local media content.

step 3:

analysis of individual citizens.

2.2 Programme for Analysis

2.2.1 Geographical Regions

The main scope of interest in this study is how differences in political and media structure does influence the flow of information in a community. Is there a narrower flow in a community whith only one newspaper than in a community with more? Which groups does have access to the media in different regions? Are there any differences between the political parties views on the media in communities with socialist respectively non-socialist majority?

To be able to gather information on these questions, four geographical regions with different political majorities and different media structures were choosen for the study. The demographic structure of these regions was also taken into consideration: two bigger cities were choosen together with one major town and one more rural area. The regions are briefly characterized in table 3.

Table 3. Geographical regions in the study, some characteristics and daily newspapers published in the region.

	POLITICAL STRUCTURE	
	SOCIALIST MAJORITY	NON-SOCIALIST MAJORITY
MEDIA STRUCTURE	Malmö/Trelleborg	Falun/Leksand
Competition	(300 000 inh.)	(60 000 inh.)
	Sydsvenska Dagbladet (lib, 116 000 cop/day)	Falu-Kuriren (lib, 32 000 cop/day)
	Arbetet (social democratic, 105 000 cop/day)	Dala-Demokraten (social democratic, 26 000 cop/day)
	Skånska Dagbladet (Center Party, 32 000 cop/day)	Mora Tidning (non pol, 13 000 cop/day)
	Kvällsposten (evening paper, lib, 108 000 cop/day)	
Non-competition	Västerås/Hallstahammar	Göteborg/Lerum
	(137 000 inh.)	485 000 inh.)
	Västmanlands läns tidning (lib, 56 000 cop/day)	Göteborgs-Posten (lib, 300 000 cop/day)
		Göteborgs-Tidningen (evening paper, lib, 80 000 cop/day)

Malmö is the provincial capital of Malmöhus - an industrial and shipping city in Southern Sweden. Trelleborg is a port and industrial town as well as the center for the southern rural area. Göteborg is characterized by commerce, industry and shipping. It is the capital of the Göteborgs and Bohus Province and situated on the Swedish West Coast. Lerum is a suburban community with a relatively large proportion of private homes. The community also has some industry. Västerås/Hallstahammar represent an expansive industrial region. Västerås is the capital of the province of Vestmanland in Middle Sweden. Falun is the capital of the province of Kopparberg in northern Middle Sweden and the regions administrative center. Leksand consists of three parts - the main town as well as the former communities Siljansnäs and Ål (Insjön) - which were amalgamated to Leksand on Jan. 1, 1974. Leksand is a commercial and tourist center. Siljansnäs is primarily a farming area, while Insjön is a center for small industry.

2.2.2 The Research Programme

The five major studies in the research programme aim at describing the role of the mass media in the political process from different views.
(1) The Area Study (called OS1) aims to illustrate the outer framework of the political process in the four geographical regions choosen for the project, (2) The Organization Study (OS2) has as its goal the demonstration of how organizations, the authorities and local enterprises utilize and judge the mass media, (3) The Content Analysis Study (MES) will describe the content of the local daily press, (4) The Journalist Study (JOS) describes the local newspapermens view of the situation, and (5) The Reciever Study (MOS) gives information about both what private individuals use in the media, and what the local decisionsmakers (councillors) think about the different media and how they use them as sources and transmitters of information.

Some of these studies consist of substudies. A brief review of these will be given here.

The Content Analysis (MES) Three content analytical studies are carried out within the framework of the project. Firstly there is a so called frontpage analysis in which the front pages of the local papers are analysed during a period of six months. The local debate on the editorial page is studied

for an equally long time. The third content analysis is a rough classification of the newspaper content as a whole during a five week period in March 1974, that is, at the same time as the receiver study is carried out.

The Receiver Study(MOS). Within each region an interview investigation is carried out with a representative sample of 500 people. Furthermore, all of the municipal councillors are interviewed. Both of these interviews aim to map the pattern of consumption of the media and opinions about the daily press.
A special study of people who have recently moved to Malmö will be made. Here the aim is to investigate how people adopt new media habits in a new environment.

The Media-receiver Study (MEMO). Finally a supplementary study to the above mentioned receiver study (MOS) is carried out. The local newspaper generally read by the respondents in the MOS study is distributed to these together with a questionnaire. The respondents are asked to mark the articles read a specific day. Questions are also asked about radio and television consumption the night before. These data are then to be compared with the total content of the newspapers, from the content analysis study (MES).

The timetable for these studies will (hopefully) be the following:

STUDY	FIELDWORK	PRELIMINARY REPORT
OS	Summer 1973	April 1974
MES	Oct 1973 - May 1974	Summer 1974
MOS	March 1974	June 1974
JOS	November 1973	June 1974
MEMO	Late April 1974	June 1974

The whole project will be reported on to the Swedish Commission on the Press in January 1975.

The empirical data presented in this paper are from the Organization Study. This study will be presented in more detail in the following.

2.3 The Organization Study

This study is directed to organizations, local authorities and local enterprises. Our purpose is to show how these organizations see their relations to the local area, to the public and to their members, (employees) as well as what role different types of media has for the organizations and political life. The most important questions in the Organization study can be summarized:

1. How many members/employees does the organization have? How active are they?
2. How does the organization regard the local community?
3. How is the internal information administrated?
4. How does the organization utilize different information channels to reach different groups in society?
5. How does the organization use different types of newspapers?
6. How are their press-contacts organized?
7. How does the organization judge different media when concerning impact on local opinion and fairness?
8. How does the organization regard different types of influence relations concerning mass media?
9. Which is the organizations opinion about the political functions of the press?
10. How does the daily press fulfill its different political functions?

The first three questions aim at a description of the organizations structure. One may say that these are the independent variables which might decide how the organization communicates with the environment. Questions 4-10 aim to illustrate the organizations relations to the media.

The method used in the study has been a mail questionnaire, distributed to a sample of about 1 600 organizations of different types: political, labour, economic and volontary organizations, local enterprises, councils and authorities. The study was carried out between the 18th of May and the 30th of August 1973.

It must be emphasized that the Organization study is only the first project in the research programme. The next step is the content analysis where we

will have the opportunity to relate the organizations judgement of the daily press to what actually is printed in the newspapers. Furthermore, the organizations opinion of which paper is most effective can be related to the individuals actual media consumption. It is therefore important not to regard the following review of the results as final: it is only when the subsequent studies are completed that results presented here can be evaluated in their total context.

3. ORGANIZATIONS IN THE MEDIA-POLITICAL PROCESS

In this part we will briefly discuss some of the results from the Organization Study. First we give a review of how the organizations judge different media as means for input and output information. Then we will look more directly to the evaluation of the local media and the media situation.

3.1 Input and output of information

The point of departure in the conceptual frame presented in the introduction is that the analysis of the daily newspapers is made on the basis of the actual situation in the regions.

Aside from structural data, it is also important to get an idea of what problem areas are topical in the respective regions and what the subjects of the political debate are.

In each of the subprojects included in the research programme questions has been asked about what questions has dominated the local debate. Organizations, community councils, enterprises (OS), journalists (JOS), municipal councillors, and private individuals (MOS) have described different matters of discussion. In the media study (MES) the actual content of the newspapers is studied.

If one were to find similarities between the content of local newspapers and the matters of discussion which were judged to be important - what would then have caused what? Is it the paper which decides the problem orientation of the organization or is it the press which adapts itself to the situation at hand?

To study this question it is important to ask how the organizations say they obtain information about local opinion. There are, of course, many different

ways of informing oneself about what is going on. Roughly, we can distinguish between two main ways: (1) direct contact with other organizations or individuals within or outside ones own organization: (2) different types of local media.

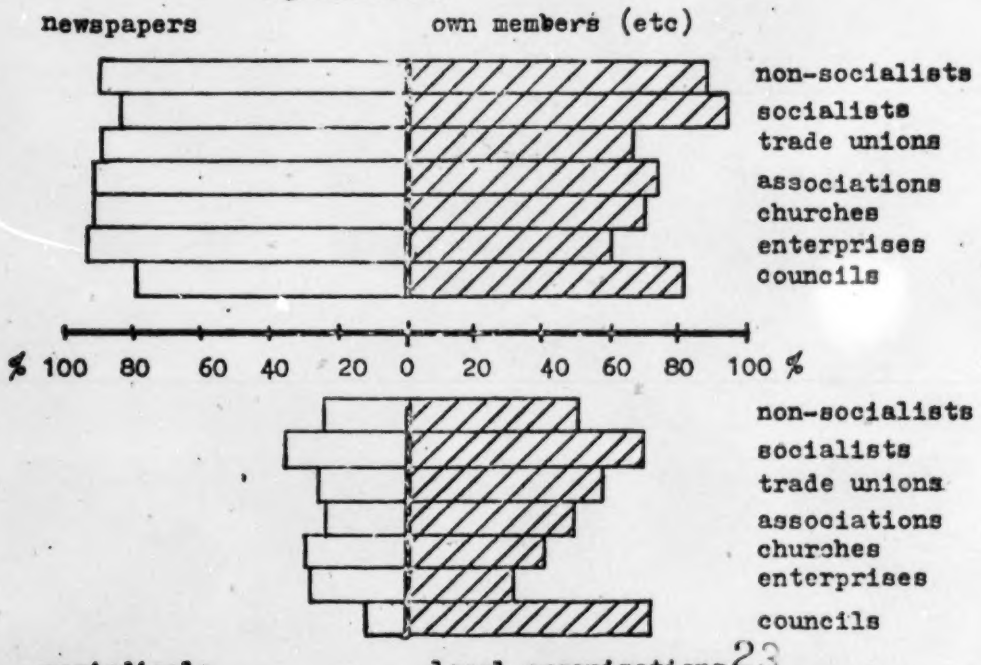
In the study the following question was asked: "How does your organization acquire information about opinions in the community? What significance do you give the following information channels?"(meetings with the general public; regional radio; daily newspapers; periodicals; community information paper; regional tv; contacts with members; contacts with local organizations),

The responses point uniformly to that all types of organizations judge direct contact as more frequent than information via mass media. This is true also for the municipal committees, while the private enterprises said that both ways of obtaining information were equally frequent.

In this type of questions there is reason to believe that prestige effects may occur. The organization might like to be regarded as having an active contact inwardly and outwardly. Thus, here there is reason to expect that an over-estimation is made of the significance of direct contact. At the same time it should be underlined that the daily press was mentioned as often and even more often than direct contact by the general associations, the churches and the private enterpirses.

In diagramme 6 the judgements of some input-channels by the different organizations are presented.

Diagramme 6. Input-channels, evaluation by different types of organizations.



The results given in diagramme 6 point to a very strong position of the local daily press as a mediator of information. All of the organizations attribute a central role to the daily press for obtaining knowledge about local opinions.

It is also possible to deduce some differences between the organizations. Here the assumption discussed in the introduction is confirmed, namely that the wider organization structure of the Social Democrats has great significance for the evaluation of the party's communication situation.

The social democratic and communist organizations stresses the importance of contact with the individual members. The structure of the social democratic organizations probably also explains the emphasis on periodicals as an important channel for input-information.

Thus the majority of organizations seem to be dependent upon the content of the local papers to get information on local opinion. This is above all true for the liberal and conservative parties, the local enterprises, churches and general associations.

So far we have shown that the daily press does play a significant role for the organizations input of information, i.e. the respondents regard the press as an important source of information on opinions among the general public.

To test the significance of different output channels the following question was asked: "Information to the general public can be given in many ways. Here we would ask you to evaluate the importance of the listed channels as means of information to the general public in the community (the same channels as above were listed).

The results point in the same direction as previously: all of the organizations attribute a very significant role to the daily press. Here, however, the political organizations deviate somewhat, as they emphasize the significance of their own public meetings, and direct contact with the public.

The political parties, as well as the churches, attribute great importance to their own publications.

3.2 Evaluation of local media

The previous discussion indicates that the organizations attribute a central position to the daily press in the local communication system. We have so far discussed the press in a more general sense. The questions put forward in this part will be: which and what kind of local papers are considered to be most important by the respondents in the regions? How is the daily press evaluated in a competition respecitvely a non-competition situation? Does a papers political affiliation affect the judgement of different organizations?

In order to throw light upon this, the following question was asked: "Which daily papers, magazines and other periodical publications are of importance in supplying information about your council/association/enterprise to the general public".

An analysis, after type of the media mentioned, shows not surprisingly that the local daily papers dominate totally as intermediaries of information to the public in every region.

Further it is interesting to note that the earlier discussed tendency among the Socialist organizations to stress the importance of periodicals also stands out clearly here. (Table 4)

Another result is that the enterprises to a considerably greater extent than others emphasizes the importance of the Stockholm newspapers. The explanation is probably that the mainpart of the activity of the enterprises examined is not, in the same way as other groups, locally bound.

It is difficult to illumminate the differences between the regions examined, through this table. For example, the higher figures for the local press in Malmö and Falun are partly explained by the fact that there are more local papers - and that all these papers get many references. The evalutation of individual papers, will be discussed in greater detail below.

Table 4. Types of mass media mentioned by different organizations. Percent.

	Non-socialist org.	Socialist org.	Trade unions	Volontary org.	Churches	Enter-prises	Councils
Malmö							
Stockholm newspapers	6	8	14	5	4	23	3
Local press	76	57	55	61	85	50	85
Periodicals	5	22	27	26	8	16	1
Own papers	5	5	1	2	0	0	1
Göteborg							
Stockholm newspaper	9	15	19	20	2	26	7
Local press	33	40	47	38	41	46	56
Periodicals	7	13	27	15	9	15	2
Own papers	3	16	1	3	24	0	0
Västerås							
Stockholm newspapers	14	6	9	5	0	22	12
Local press	37	63	50	48	48	34	60
Periodicals	14	28	33	24	24	37	5
Own papers	4	0	2	3	16	0	0
Falun							
Stockholm newspapers	11	7	15	6	2	26	3
Local press	45	63	54	51	61	48	59
Periodicals	8	15	20	16	13	11	0
Own papers	0	0	0	7	4	0	0

The role of the periodicals is another interesting tendency that can be indicated in table 4.

The high figures for periodicals in Västerås are of particularly interest. A special situation of communication is indicated in this region and special attention will be paid to this as the data from the Receiver study (MOS) is analysed.

The difference between the local councils and other groups in their judging of media is noticable. The councils seem to have an attitude that implies that the local daily press is the most important intermediary of so called society information. This also correspond to a tradition in the authorities information activity.

To conclude, the local daily press seem to fullfill a political function, both as agents for passing opinion from the general public to the decision makers, and information on political decisions to the public. The periodicals, on the other hand, seem to have a more important function as carriers of opinion.

To further analyse the attitudes of the organizations towards the press, the respondents were asked to evaluate the different local and national media in terms of local power of influence and objectivity.

First we can state, that the papers are strongly profilated by the political organizations. The non-socialist groups say that the independent and liberal newspapers are more objective than those of the Social democrates. On the other hand the socialists state that they to a great extent have been treated injust by the liberal newspapers.

The political organizations judgement of the objectivity of the main newspapers in the geographical regions are in table 5.

The table gives an idea of what influence the non-competition respectively the competition situation can have on the parties judgement of the daily papers. In Malmö and Falun (competition) the socialistic organizations have a considerably less critical attitude to the leading paper in comparison with Göteborg and Västerås (non-competition).

On the contrary the non-socialist groups in the non-competition regions have a less positive attitude to the leading papers than those in the competition regions have. A conclusion can be, that in places where a real

situation of competition is at hand, the parties give the daily papers a greater importance to their own creation of public opinion than in the non-competition regions, where both non-socialist and socialist groups feel that they are treated less objective.

Table 5. Political organizations and main liberal and social democratic newspapers in the four regions. Judgement of objectivity, percent.

	NON-SOCIALISTS		SOCIALISTS	
	Objective	Non objective	Objective	Non objective
Malmö				
Sydsvenska Dagbladet (liberal)	88	8	15	63
Arbetet (soc.dem.)	18	78	95	2
Göteborg				
Göteborgs-Posten (liberal)	74	19	7	86
Arbetet (soc.dem.) 1)	3	73	90	10
Västerås				
Vestmanlands läns tidning (liberal)	85	15	13	83
Västmanlands Folkblad (soc.dem.) 2)	4	72	91	6
Falun				
Falu-Kuriren (liberal)	90	10	13	63
Dala-Demokraten (soc.dem.)	10	86	100	0

1) Arbetet has a coverage of only 5 percent in the Göteborg-region

2) weekly, 3 500 copies

28 The organizations judgement of different papers power of local influence, all the organizations judge the local leading paper approximately in the

Dagens Nyheter is judged in a similar way by all party groups, while particularly Aftonbladet has been attributed greater power of influence by the socialists than by the non-socialists. It is reason to believe that Aftonbladet in all the regions is placed as a part of the local information structure by the social democrats.

Radio and television are judged in almost the same way by the different groups in the regions. The First Programme in television (TV1) is regarded as more positive to the non-socialist organizations among these, while TV2 (the Second Programme in television) to a rather great extent is critisized by this group. The socialist group make a similar judgement of both the channels. The number of socialist organizations who states that TV1 gives their views an objective treatment is yet considerably smaller than the corresponding number among the non-socialists. As far as TV2 is regarded, the positive group among the Socialists is considerably greater than the corresponding group among the non-socialists.

A common tendency concerning the different organizations' judgement of mass media is that one can observe a certain polarization. We have on one hand a group consisting of socialist-organizations and trade unions and on the other hand one with the non-socialist organizations and other groups. We can get an idea of the degree of consensus between different groups from table 6.

Table 6. Degree of consensus between different organizations in judging objectivity of mass media. Spearmans rank-correlation.

	socia-lists	trade unions	volontary org.	churches	enter-prises	councils
non-socialists	-.14	.48	.71	.69	.76	.62
socialists		.62	.26	-.19	-.24	.33
trade unions			.74	.17	.33	.90
volontary organizations				.64	.79	.93
churches					.74	.50
enterprises						.67

The correlation between the two political groups is nearly nought (0).

This implies consequently that the opinions differ, without indicating that the socialist and non-socialist organizations have totally different opinions concerning mass media. The non-socialist group has a high degree of opinion fellowship with in particular the volontary organizations, the churches and the local enterprises, when judging the objectivity of mass media. The social democrats have, on the contrary, opinions which resemble those of the trade unions, while they in many cases have an opinion which is opposed to that of the industry.

Summary In this part of the paper we have discussed the organizations evaluation of the press from different aspects. I have demonstrated that the organizations place the mass media and especially the newspapers in the very center of the local communication system. However, the political parties, also stress the importance of different organizational channels as means of information to and from the general public. Especially the socialist organizations does put forward these latter channels, together with periodicals, which seem to play an important role for these organizations. This can partly be explained with the wider organizational structure of the socialist parties, but also with their attitude towards the local liberal newspapers. To a great extent these parties regard the liberal papers as non-objective, when informing on subjects put forward by the Socialists. On the other hand the non-socialist political organizations regard the Social Democratic newspapers as non fair, when dealing with their ideas. But, on the whole, the non-socialist groups regard the liberal papers as fair and objective.

There is a tendency in the empirical data presented here, that the evaluation of the newspapers does covary with the media situation. In regions with competition, the Socialists are less negative to the liberal newspapers, than in non-competition areas. There is also a tendency that the non-socialist organizations in the non-competition regions are less positive to these newspapers. The conclusion may be that a situation of competition among newspapers with different political affiliation, does stimulate the political debate. An interesting question to be answered in the Content Study (MES) of the research programme is to what extent there really is a difference in political content between the newspapers in competition respectively non-competition regions. It will also be of interest in the Receiver Study (MOS) to see to what extent the individuals experience some differences in this

aspect among the newspapers.

It has also been pointed out that there, among groups of respondents, is a consensus conserning the evaluation of different media. The socialist organizations and the trade unions judge the media in a similar way; as do the non-socialist and volontary organizations, the churches and the local enterprises.

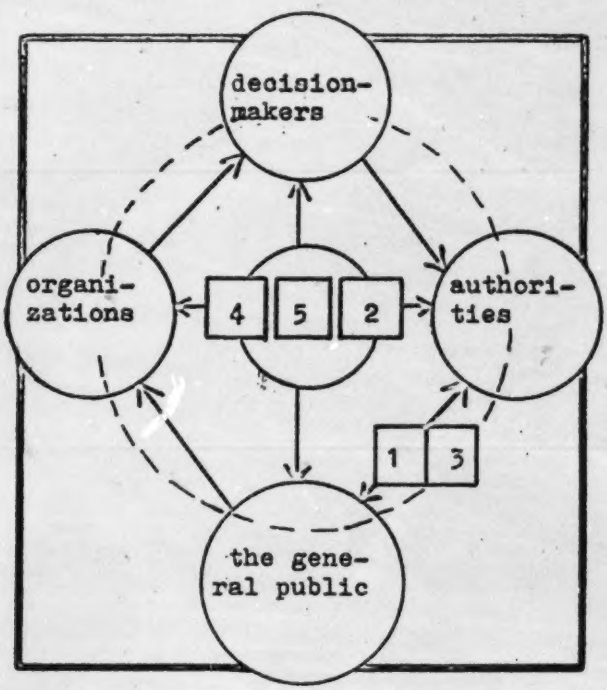
In the next part the political functions of mass media will be further discussed.

4. POLITICAL FUNCTIONS OF THE MASS MEDIA

4.1 Evaluation of Political Functions

From what has been said this far, we can indicate different roles or functions for mass media. The daily press have an important task in spreading opinions of different groups, to be discussed in public and giving information on decisions made by the authorities. The periodicals main function seem to be to create opinion. In diagramme 7 we have tried to systematize some possible functions of the daily press in the political system. It is obviously not all possible functions the press can - or shall - fullfill, but it illustrates one way of approaching the main question: the political functions of the press in society.

Diagramme 7. Some possible political funtions of the press in society.



The functions corresponding to the figures are:

1. To mediate information from authorities to citizens.
2. To critically analyse the measures taken by the authorities.
3. To inform the authorities of the wants of the citizens.
4. To report on different events in political life.
5. To explain and interpret events in political life.

In the study the organizations were asked which of these functions they regarded as most important to be fullfilled by the daily press. They were also asked to give their opinion on how satisfying the regional press did fullfill these functions. In table 7 the evaluation of these functions by the different organizations is shown.

Table 7. Relative evaluation of five political functions of the press by organizations. Percent, first preferens.

	NON-SOCIALISTS	SOCIA-LISTS	TRADE UNIONS	VOL. ORG.	CHUR-CHES	ENTER-PRISES	COUNCILS
(1) to mediate information	26	24	21	29	37	8	35
(2) to analyse critically	39	17	26	35	26	50	19
(3) to inform the authorities	16	12	22	19	20	15	18
(4) to report on political events	7	14	14	9	10	4	11
(5) to explain and interpret	12	32	17	9	8	24	17
Total	100	99	100	101	101	101	100

The two functions that most often are mentioned as important are (2) to critically analyse the measures taken by the authorities and (1) to mediate information from authorities to citizens. (See diagramme 7.)

These two tasks can be regarded as "traditional". They correspond to the idea that the newspapers can be seen in relation to the state: they shall give information both of what is happening in politics (i.e. authorities of different kinds) and also critically analyse the measures taken; the press as a "third power of state".

The organizations which above all stress these functions are the non-socialists, the churches, the volontary organizations and the enterprises. Among these groups the critical role is above all stressed.

The task of the press to explain and interpret different events in political life dominates however the attitudes within the socialist group.

The task to inform the authorities about the wishes of the citizens seems not to have been attributed the same importance - possibly with the exception of the trade unions and the churches. The function which has got the least number of preferences is (4) "to report on different events in political life". Maybe this is because the organizations feel that the latter function is the natural basis for the other functions of the press.

How to explain these differences between the groups - especially between the political parties? The simpliest explanation might be that the party in power in a specific community stresses the information function, while other parties stress the critical, the control function of the press. Another, from a theorethical point of view more interesting explanation could be related to the different ideologies of the political parties.

The media are seen as a part of a bigger society. One perspective would be a consequence of a conception of the political process, emanating from existing circumstances. From this position the functions of the press is evaluated. The other perspective questions partly the description of reality made in the daily press: the papers don't give a realistic picture of politics, it is not enough to report on events -interpretations and analysis of what is happening shall also be made. This perspective will be further discussed in the concluding part of this paper.

In a follow up question the respondents were asked if they considered that there are other functions for the daily press, beside those earlier mentioned.

Among other further tasks mentioned those of supplying information and creating opinion are above all stressed; a selection of the answers will be presented in the following (within parenthesis the type of political organization giving a specific answer i stated):

> To mediate information from individuals and organizations (public institutions etc) to the general public. To be objectively veracious in the reporting and not for political purposes withhold important news from the readers. Such concealment seems to become more and more frequent and the papers should not put the blame on lack of space. Such actions should be considered quite as serious as to give the reporting political tendencies (Social Democrat).
>
> Report objectively on what has happened. Explain the reasons behind political decisions and not only what has been said (Social Democrat).

To critically look into the big business operations. To depict ordinary people's situation (working and housing conditions, finances etc). (Communist)

The newspapers shall be as objective as possible. (Conservative)

To be neutral - without political affiliations. (Center Party)

To interpret and explain objectively.(Conservative)

To supply information about new reforms. (Social Democrat)

To stimulate discussions. (Social Democrat)

To report on cultural matters and foreign politics. (Center Party)

That all political parties should be able to communicate with the readers on the editorial page, especially in the municipalities where one paper is circulated to nearly 90 percent of the households. Sometimes we feel it frightening that one person has the monopoly of the free word. (Center Party)

These questions show a rather wide range of opinions about the press. In several of the quotations the perspective of information is put forward. The organizations don't feel properly informed by the daily press; this has been discussed above in connection with the question of the degree of objectivity in the local daily papers.

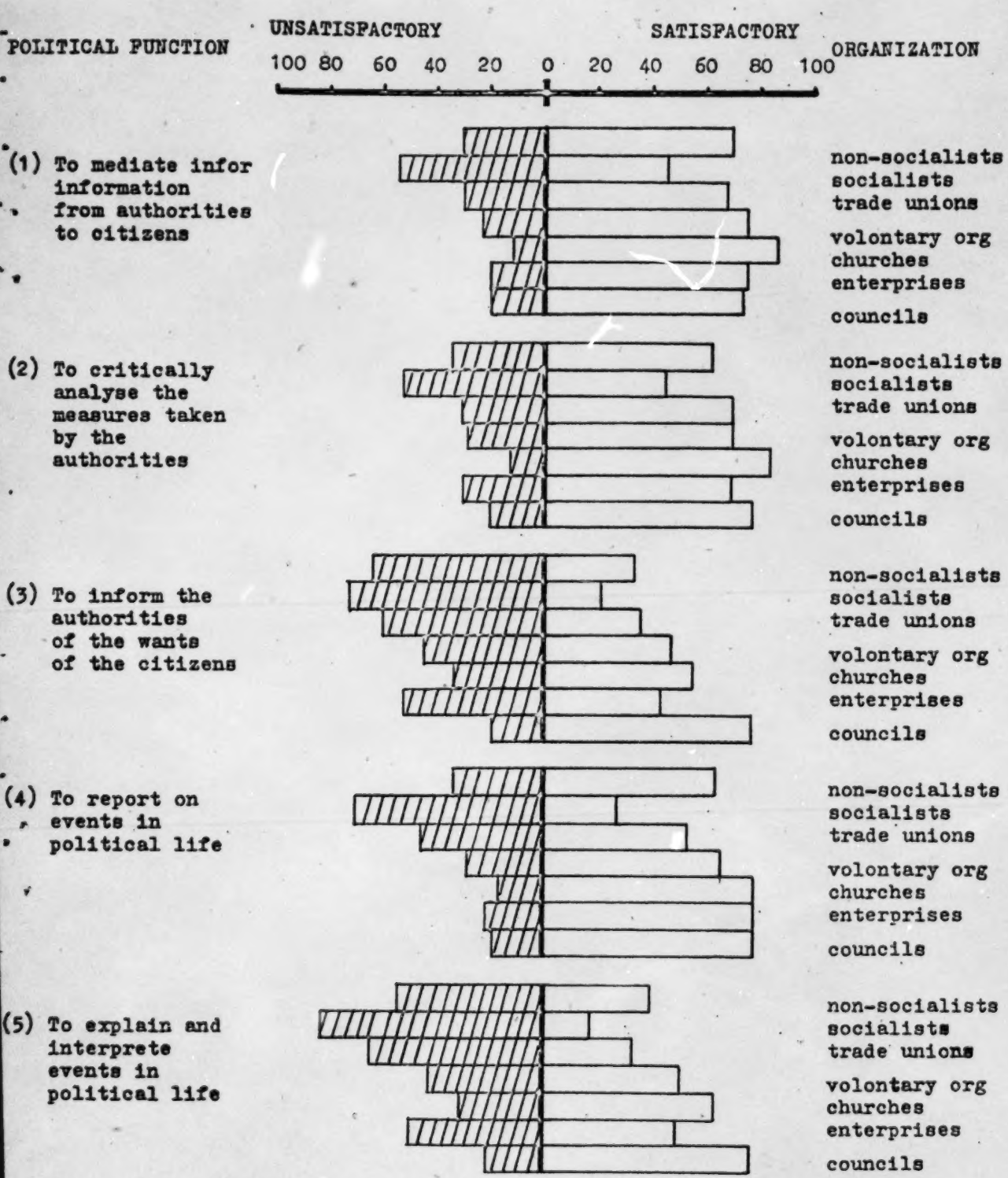
4.2 Political functions and the Daily press.

This far we have shown which functions, accordning to the organizations, are fundamental for the local daily press. The question now is how the local papers fullfill these tasks.

Briefly it can be stated that the local papers are very well off in a critical survey. Nearly all organizations - except the Socialists - mean that the supply of information from authorities to citizens, the criticism of the authorities and the reporting on political life are satisfactory fullfilled by the press.

Diagramme 8 shows how the organizations judge the daily press in this respect.

Diagramme 8: Judgements by the organizations of how the daily papers fulfil different political functions. Percent.


POLITICAL FUNCTION
UNSATISPACTORY
SATISPACTORY
100 80 60 40 20 0 20 40 60 80 100
ORGANIZATION
(1) To mediate infor information from authorities to citizens
(2) To critically analyse the measures taken by the authorities
(3) To inform the authorities of the wants of the citizens
(4) To report on events in political life
(5) To explain and interprete events in political life
non-socialists
socialists
trade unions
volontary org
churches
enterprises
councils

The most interesting difference is found between the bourgeois- and the socialist groups. It has already been stated that these differed in opinion of which function is the most important for the daily press. The socialist organizations deviated from the dominating pattern by - to stress a point - questioning the description of reality in the daily papers. If this conclusion is correct we should then find a considerably greater discontent with the daily papers among these organizations than among the others. The bourgeois organizations shouldn't differ very much from the rest of the organizations.

The hypothesis about the socialist organizations' critical conception about how the papers function today seem, on the whole, to be confirmed by the pattern in diagramme 8.

When considering the function that these organizations put forward as especially important - to explain and interpret events in the political life - as many as four-fifths consider this task not to be fullfilled satisfactorily. The corresponding amount among the bourgeois parties is a little more than half.

When looking at the task that the non-socialists consider the most important more than two-thirds of these say that the task is satisfactorily performed. The same tendency applies for the rest of the groups: the task that has been said to be the most important is also - on the whole - considered to be well performed by the local papers.

The community councils seem to be the most positive group. For each of the functions mentioned in the questionnaire, four-fifths consider that the press does fullfill their role satisfactorily.

4.3 Influence on Mass Media

Much of the debate in Sweden on the media recent years has concerned matters of influence. Who is to control the mass media? What does control imply, etc? These problems will briefly be discused in this study. Two questions on the matter were asked: (1) does the organization want some kinds of new influence relations? and (2) if so, who shall get more influence? The latter question was asked concerning the daily press, the (planned) local radio and (discussed) cable television.

A narrow majority of the organizations want some kind of new control mechanism. Most positive are the Socialists, the trade unions and the churches. Somewhat less than 50 percent among the non-socialist organizations are positive, and the same goes for the local enterprises and the community councils.

It is interesting to note that so many organizations agree that a new control mechanism could be applied to the press. The tradition of the "free press" has often signified an interpretation, where all external influence on the media has been considered undue. Here, though, is given an account of a more "open" attitude to different forms of influence.

The question of the influence relation is not really interesting until you ask who is going to have the opportunity to exercise an influence. Does the respondent want organizations, government, municipality or others to put representatives in the board? Or is there any other model? Should different interests be represented in different media?

In the answers to this question there has been an obvious bias in favour of the own type of organization. This is above all true when the organizations were asked about new influence relations concerning the daily press.

Concerning the general conception of what interests ought to be represented, there are two main interest parties:

(1) the local organizations - especially political and voluntary associations, and
(2) the municipality. Others, for example the government or local enterprises have a rather limited number of spokesmen.

There are also certain differences between the media. There is an obvious tendency to regard the press more tied to organizations. Political, trade or voluntary organizations have received the highest figures while the municipality has received somewhat lower values.

Concerning local radio and cable-television the municipality's share of indirect values is higher. The largest part of the answers in all groups refer to the municipality or some organization.

In table 8 the judgement of the political groups - socialist vs. non-socialist - are compared.

Table 8. Possible participants in the board of daily newspapers, local radio and cable tv stations. Opinions expressed by political organizations. Percentage positive toward respectively participant.

POSSIBLE PARTICIPANTS IN THE BOARD	DAILY PAPERS		LOCAL RADIO		CABLE TV	
	Non-socialists	Socialists	Non-socialists	Socialists	Non-socialists	Socialists
Governmental agencies	12	38	16	38	23	48
The municipality	28	57	53	65	49	58
Local enterprises	21	17	33	20	30	18
Local political parties	43	70	50	66	44	59
Trade unions	29	74	36	63	33	59
Voluntary organizations	34	47	45	47	43	42

There is obviously a much more positive attitude among the socialist organizations towards different mechanisms of control and different controllers of the local mass media. This is due for every source of influence, but the local enterprises, towards which the non-socialist organizations are more positive. The Socialists stresses influence on daily papers from (1) trade unions and (2)local political parties, while the non-socialist organizations only stresses the local parties as participants in a board. The same main tendency is found when the political organizations judge the local radio and cable television.

In general, the results point to the fact that the respondents experience, a closer connection between the daily press and the local organizations,

than between these and the local radio and cable television. This tendency can be explained in different ways:
it can be connected with the fact that the organizations regard the newspapers as important to the activity of an organization. Another explanation can be financial: You know that radio and television require large investments. This implies that some kind of guarantor, for example the municipality, is natural.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Let us shortly summarize what has been the scope of this paper, which is based on the Organization Study (OS) of the research programme "The Role of the Press in Society". The study was carried out in Summer 1973 and the method used was a mail questionnaire, distributed to different political and voluntary organizations, trade unions, churches, private enterprises and community councils in four Swedish regions.

The main aim of this paper has been to analyse the use of mass media by different organizations (including private enterprises and community councils) and their evaluation of the local media situation.

A dominant impression from the study is the great importance that daily papers of different kinds are given in the local political life. This is not only valid for conventional daily papers but also other papers 'with the distinguishing features of a daily paper', that is the party-connected local papers which are published once a week. Both for input and output information the organizations use the daily papers as channels. It is remarkable that the daily paper is said to be of the same importance as the organizations own direct, internal channels of information.

If you try to get a picture of the role of the daily press in the political process, some figures show that the papers have especially great importance to the so called society information, i.e. the authorities' public information to the citizens. The community councils highly value the daily press in this respect.

Also to create opinion the papers - together with periodicals of different kinds - are very important. If you analyse the local media situation you will here find a clear political bias in the judgement of the separate pa-

pers. The independent and liberal papers are considered as clearly political by the socialist organizations.

The socialist organizations also stress the importance of their own organization as a mean of information in the political work. The papers are often regarded as an important part of this activity.

Generally can be stated that the political organizations and the trade unions are less content with the local daily press than are the rest of the organizations, the community councils and local enterprises. Furthermore there is a clear line of demarcation in the judgement of the daily press between the bourgeois and the socialist organizations. This can be seen for instance in the estimation of how the press fullfills its tasks in Sweden today.

A speculative analysis of these figures indicates that the differens between these two media-ideologies seems to be of fundamental character; it is not only a question of how the media function in society but also how the newspaper describes the political reality. The socialist organizations have here a conception based on critizism of the picture of society that the leading papers supply: it is not only the question of how well a certain idea is covered, but also - and perhaps above all - how reality is presented. To stress a point you may say that it is a question of what values shall decide the flow of news and information in society i. e. of power.

This difference in media-ideology is also illustrated by the different approaches by the socialist and non-socialist organizations to the question of possible control mechanism of the media. A quite larger part of the socialists mean that the mass media shall be controlled by political parties, governmental agencies or local community branches, than of the non-socialists. However, a relatively large part of the latter group also agrees that it could be a possibility to have organizations of different kinds represented in the boards of the mass media.

With this perspective the question of the relation between the structure and the content becomes very interesting. The newspapers are a central element in the local communication structure: what does this mean to the content of the political communication? And on the other hand, what does this mean to political life? These questions form the startingpoint of the analysis that will be presented from the research programme "The Role of the Press in Society" primarily in connection with the Content Analysis (MES) and the Receiver Study (MOS).

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